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ABSTRACT

The Cooperative Extension Service has become the largest adult education and human service program in the United States. It makes use of about 1.5 million adult volunteers who spend an average of more than 100 hours each conducting Extension programs under the guidance of extension personnel. Volunteers play a variety of roles including policy formation, teaching and coordinating Extension activities, training volunteers, supervising projects, supporting Extension programs, and providing facilities, funds, and other resources and services. Over the years, roles of extension volunteers have become both specialized and diversified. Yet, Extension has not created nor clarified volunteers' job titles. Volunteers should be classified and given different levels of training according to their needs and participation areas. Categorizing volunteers by their titles will help Extension personnel plan and deliver a unified and systematic recruiting and training program for volunteer development. The need for categorizing volunteers based on titles and expanding the number of volunteers and the volunteer sector will be the major effort of Extension in the near future. Giving volunteers titles will also help the organization evaluate volunteers' effectiveness as well as increase their involvement. (Tables are provided showing suggested titles for volunteers in the various program areas of Extension.) (KC)

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EXTENSION VOLUNTEERS

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EXTENSION VOLUNTEERS

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 made it possible for every county in the United States to have representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture and the State Land-grant college as a local educator to help people help themselves in their pursuit of an improved living. By this representation process, people, governments, and agencies are tied together for planning and financing of educational programs. The extension personnel are responsible for the development and conduct of the extension education program in each county. The extension personnel equipped with a knowledge base and an immediate linkage for supervision and educational training back-up to the land-grant system must learn what people want or would appreciate in educational programs. This learning would not be possible without the support, encouragement, and contribution of people in the community where the extension agents are employed. The traditional and common name for these people are 'volunteers'. Each extension agent must engage the local citizens (volunteers or volunteer groups) to freely devote their time and encouragement in the development of

extension-assisted educational programs which they feel would be of benefit to the community.

Volunteerism is as Old as Civilization

Volunteerism is as old as civilization in the United States. It evolved from a culture of cooperation among early American settlers and is a continuing influence on our values, nonvocational activities, education, religion, culture, and welfare (Mason, 1984). Volunteerism grew and flourished as a silent sector while the community was developing. People formed voluntary groups, societies, and organizations to help themselves and members of society and thus a complex system of volunteerism developed in many areas in the United States. Interestingly enough, many volunteer associations we recognize today grew out of peoples' responses to crisis situations. The extension service has a long history of volunteer participation to carryout educational programs. We might say that it goes as far as back to 1903 when Seaman A. Knapp, an extension pioneer, recruited volunteers to help with Boll Weevil demonstration in the South. Since that beginning, extension volunteers has emerged as a corner-stone in planning and implementing of extension educational programs. Thus, the Cooperative Extension Service has become the largest adult education and human service program in the United States. In fact, the Cooperative Extension Service as a whole

organization deals with about 1.5 million adult volunteers who put in an average of more than 100 hours each conducting extension programs under the guidance of extension personnel at various levels. Their time is equivalent to over 90,000 man-years. Accordingly, the contribution of volunteer time and resources amounts to five times that of the paid extension personnel in extension service (USDA/NASULGL, 1983). Thus, clearly there are thousands of volunteers taking part in extension planning, developing, and delivery of programs.

Extension Program and Personnel

Extension personnel, involved in planning and implementing extension educational programs use resources and services from many different persons, groups, and organizations. An extension agent entering a new program area is all alone. Even if the persons is well prepared in his/her assigned field he/she will not be successful in designing and delivering extension education programs unless he/she can reach out to citizens and invite them to participate and work with him/her. A new agent entering a unit for the first time must reach out to citizens to learn about expectations and past programs as a springboard to his/her involvement in the new surroundings. The agent must be able to seek needed support from persons those willing to give freely of their time. People are willing not only to

help the extension agent but also be part of the human service program in the community. Volunteers often need assistance from extension agents in describing and defining volunteer roles. Volunteers always bring a willingness to share their knowledge, experiences, motivations, and have a commitment to work for the community. Agents and volunteers must work together in deciding how best to carry out a defined program.

The Cooperative Extension Service, organized by USDA at the national level, and 73 land-grant institutions at the state level, conducts extension education programs in the area of Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H, Community Resource Development, and Home Economics in 3147 counties and cities. According to the County Agent Directory of 1985, 216 directors and assistant directors, 377 administrators, 4462 specialists, 616 supervisors, 674 area agents, and 10,741 extension agents are employed as paid extension personnel to work in the all four major service areas. The total of 17,086 extension personnel are directly or indirectly linked to 2.9 million volunteers to develop and deliver a wide variety of extension programs. Without the participation of their vast majority of volunteers, it is inconceivable that extension educational programs could succeeded in rallying the resources they need to relay useful knowledge where it is needed.

Roles of Volunteers

Roles refer to the functions or titles assumed by a person in a volunteer setting. The roles of volunteers in the Cooperative Extension Service could be viewed from three perspectives:

1. What resources and talents do the volunteers bring to the extension?
2. Which of these volunteers' talents are useful and necessary to do their jobs?
3. What must extension staff provide the volunteer to help them to do their jobs?

Extension personnel in all program areas encourage and expect volunteers to play a variety of roles in planning, implementing, and evaluating extension educational programs. Accordingly, the distinct roles of volunteers in extension includes:

1. Recommending policies and participating in the planning process.
2. Teaching, sharing, and coordinating extension activities.
3. Training volunteers.
4. Supervising projects.
5. Speaking, writing, and campaigning for extension programs.
6. Providing facilities, funds, and other resources and services.

Over the years, roles of extension volunteers have become both specialized and diversified. Yet the extension has not invested heavily in clarifying titles on job descriptions. Although the volunteers and their roles are a key ingredient in the Cooperative Extension Service, relatively little effort has been made to categorize volunteers and use them effectively in extension programs other than in the 4-H program area.

Need for Volunteer Titles

Volunteerism in the extension, as in many other situations, exists as a silent sector. Only recently has the extension studied the involvement of people as volunteers. This inquiry has not yet focussed attention exclusively on volunteer titles. Although the accountability and evaluation council of the Cooperative Extension Service has designated volunteerism as a high priority topic for evaluation in the near future, the volunteer remains as a form of an unorganized and unspecified group of people. Many extension staff fail to identify this free labor force in their thinking about extension programming. The extension must learn to identify and more effectively utilize human resources on the local level to broaden the impact or contribution of volunteers in the extension education system.

The key to volunteer development, as we see it, is to have a systematic way of recruiting, training, utilizing, evaluating, and recognizing the volunteers. Based on participation behavior and commitment of extension volunteers, they can be classified into at least three major categories:

1. Regular Volunteers - People who continue their services and support to the extension service. Regular volunteers may be affiliated with human service organization or clubs such as 4-H, community councils, homemakers councils, and agricultural commodity committees.
2. Occasional Volunteers - People who take part only in specific aspects of extension programs which are interest to them, and for which they have the time to devote their services.
3. Seasonal Volunteers - People who take part only in specific times of every year in the programs which are interest to them.

The classification of volunteer types shows that different volunteers are motivated and committed in different aspects of volunteerism in different program areas in the extension. Accordingly, volunteers need different levels of training and resources from the extension. Categorizing volunteers by their titles will help extension personnel to plan and deliver a unified and systematic

recruiting and training program for volunteer development within the extension. In a recent national survey on volunteerism, extension personnel suggested that they devoted about one-fifth of their time to leadership training or organizational work with extension volunteers. Much of time is required because approximately one-third of the total volunteers dropout and new volunteers are recruited. If extension volunteers were categorized by their titles in each service areas, each extension unit of the Cooperative Extension Service not only could save time and resources but also could avoid unnecessary duplication of effort in recruiting and training of volunteers. Thus, clearly there is a need for categorize extension volunteers by titles in each program area in the Cooperative Extension Service.

Titles of Extension Volunteers

The need for categorizing volunteers based on titles and expanding the number of volunteers and the volunteer sector will be the major effort of the extension organization in the near future. Widespread use of volunteers represents a strong commitment to the extension education programs of a community, and make it possible for thousands of people to have information they would not have if there were only paid extension personnel. Some specific roles for volunteers have become well established and recognized in some program areas and have specific titles such as: organizational

leader, project leader, master gardener, committee member, advisory counsel member, and farm demonstration host. The above titles are derived from the roles the extension volunteers play in each of the following aspects of the Cooperative Extension Service:

1. Direction of programs and policies.
2. Managerial designing of program delivery.
3. Direct service delivery.
4. Providing support, materials, and facilities.

The titles and number of volunteers within each titles vary from one program area to another. The relationship among extension personnel, volunteers, and clients could be understand well through the categories of titles of extension volunteers. Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 show a comprehensive listings of titles of extension volunteers across the four service areas in the Cooperative Extension Service.

Advantages of Volunteer Titles

Human resources and services to conduct extension education programs can only come from the people in the community. People who render their support and services to the extension for community services and expect no monetary gains are volunteers. Many volunteers and volunteer groups have no titles but continue in the roles in which they are interested. Titles of many volunteers have been overshadow

Table 1
Titles of Extension Volunteers in Agriculture Program

Volunteer roles	Titles of Volunteers
Direction of programs & policy	Advisory Council Program Plang.Commt. Commodity Com's. Breed Associations Fair Board Agricultural Business council
Managerial designing of program delivery	Fair Superintendent Field Day Committee Program Work Leader Officers of Clubs Event Committees Demonstration Plot Cooperator Commodity Committee
Direct service delivery	Workshop Leaders Master Volunteers Demo Plot Providers Master Gardeners Host/ess of Ex.Event Informal Teachers Tour Guide
Provide support, materials,& facilities	Fund Raisers Car poolers Demonstration supply providers Materials Developers Leader Trainers Materials Providers

Table 2
Titles of Extension Volunteers in Home Economics Program

Volunteer roles	Titles of Volunteers
Direction of programs & policy	Advisory Council-Unit Homeeconomic Council Program Plang.Commt. Extension Homemakers Council Events & Acty. Comm.
Managerial designing of program delivery	Program work chairs Program Area Committee Special Events Committee
Direct service delivery	Formal Teachers Master Volunteers Telephone Committee Master Food Preservers Host/ess of Ex.Event Project Leader
Provide support, materials,& facilities	Demonstration Material Providers Car poolers Telephone Committee Materials Developers

Table 3
Titles of Extension Volunteers in Community Resource Program

Volunteer roles	Titles of Volunteers
Direction of programs & policy	Advisory Council (Inter-Agency) Program Plang.Commt. Unit Advisory Council Events & Acty. Comm.
Managerial designing of program delivery	Economic Development Committee Anti Litter Committee Community Special Event Committee Community Study Groups Event Committees
Direct service delivery	Community Leaders Master Volunteers Survey Study Committee Member President, Community Problems Host/ess of Ex.Event Activity Leader
Provide support, materials,& facilities	Fund Raisers Car poolers Telephone Committee Materials Developers Informal community Leaders Facility Providers Materials Providers

Table 4
Titles of Extension Volunteers in 4-H Program

Volunteer roles	Titles of Volunteers
Direction of programs & policy	4-H Leaders Association 4-H youth Council 4-H Advisory Council 4-H All Star 4-H Horse/Livestock Committee Co. 4-H Foundations 4-H Fund Committee
Managerial designing of program delivery	Project Committee Key 4-H Leader Project Work Leader Officers of Clubs Event Committees Recruitment Coach 4-H Organization Leader 4-H Leader Association
Direct service delivery	4-H Project leaders Master Volunteers Teen Leaders Parent Coach Host/ess of Ex.Event Recruiters Club Organizers
Provide support, materials,& facilities	Fund Raisers Car poolers Telephone Committee Materials Developers Ambassadors Leader Trainers Materials Providers

by their common cover name 'volunteer'. The significance of identifying and using volunteers by their title is not very much exploited in volunteer development of extension. In fact, commitment and motivation of million of volunteers are used as 'unidentified boosters' in many extension activities. But the need and time has come to categorize volunteers by titles and to optimize their contributions to the extension organization as well as to the community. This more formal treatment of the contribution of volunteers could be incorporated into extension programs without organizational or functional change in the Cooperative Extension Service.

Volunteer activities range from simple responsibilities such as answering a telephone call in the office to more complex undertakings such as conducting an extension program in the field. Each type of task performed by volunteers needs training and resources from the extension organization. But the extension organization cannot extend its effort with volunteers beyond its capability. Volunteer activities need support and nurturing from the extension organization. It must control its resources in volunteer development and their use in extension activities. Identifying volunteers by titles could help the extension organization to use its resources at an optimal level in volunteerism. Further, volunteers can also recognize their responsibilities, extent of their commitment, and

relationship with extension personnel and clients as volunteers in the extension organization as well as in the community. Volunteers contribute their talent, energy, other personal resources, and information about local situations to the extension personnel. If volunteers were well informed of their responsibilities, the kind of programs or groups they work with, and the help and training available from the extension, volunteers can increase their satisfaction in being a part of the extension organization.

Volunteers must be adequately prepared for their roles through an effective recruiting and training plan. Recruiting and training must be an on-going activity from which volunteers can revitalize themselves in extension activities. Volunteers change but the titles remain and it is very visible. Thus, it is possible for the extension organization to develop a training modules for recruiting and developing new volunteers to replace the dropouts as well as for emerging community needs and demands. Attracting potential volunteers becomes easy for extension personnel if volunteers are categorized by titles. That is, extension personnel would be able to have a clear understanding on what type of volunteers and when and where they are needed either to supplement or complement their activities. Furthermore, it appears that with appropriate titles for volunteers, management of volunteers could be handled relatively easily by extension personnel.

Volunteers can be assured of their suitability for particular programs or activities in the extension organization. Categorizing volunteers by their titles could help volunteers eventually to become administratively or professionally skilled volunteers in their career. Thus, categorizing the volunteers by their titles seems like a logical step not only for expanding the volunteerism within the extension but also for increasing the involvement of volunteers in the volunteer sector.

Evaluation of volunteer activities in extension can also be an effective method of expanding the 'span of spread' of volunteers at the local level. Volunteer evaluation not only must show whether the volunteers have accomplished what they set out to do, but also be a guiding light for new directions for future volunteer expansion. A lack of specific titles can only lead evaluators to confusion as well as make it difficult to understand the volunteer activities.

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